

SOME REMARKS ON THE ORTHOGRAPHY OF THE SIGNS  
OLIGON, PETASTE, OXEIA AND KOUPHISMA

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In my dissertation "An analysis of stichera in the Deuteros modes" which was published in volumes 22 and 23 of "Cahiers" in 1977, 56 stichera idiomela of the month of September from MS Sinai 1230 (A.D.1365), were submitted to a systematic musicological analysis. This study - as I believe - proved helpful to the understanding of the unwritten but strict rules which determine the use of special musical formulas for the composition of byzantine sticheraric melodies. On the other hand this same musical material, as analysed and published systematically in detailed tables, constitutes a useful working instrument for a deeper and more thorough analysis of sticheraric melodies. This work was an important step forward; but as Prof. Jørgen Raasted writes in the foreword to the above dissertation "there remains a great deal of analytical work to be done before we really learn to understand and appreciate the compositional patchwork of such melodies".

This paper, being a second step in this direction, is based entirely on the very same musical material, i.e. the 56 stichera idiomela, which were published in the 22 volume of the Cahiers; the corresponding stichera of MS Coislin 42 (15 cent.) are used but only supplementarily.

As it is well known, 6 signs are used to denote the interval of the ascending second in Byzantine Music, i.e. Oligon —, Petaste ⌈, Oxeia ⌉, Kouphisma ⌋, Dyo Kentemata .., and Pelaston ↗. Now the question rises: Why are so many signs used for the ascending seconds? From a cursory examination of the melodies it becomes evident that each one of the above signs has a strictly determined position and effect; in other words its use in this or that position is dictated by strict orthographic

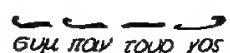
rules. The purpose of this presentation is exactly the investigation of these rules.

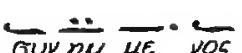
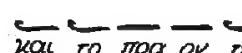
Before getting into the essence of this subject I would like to clarify one point: that in this paper (which is a part of a larger research on all signs of Middle Byzantine Notation) only 4 of the above mentioned 6 signs are examined, i.e. Oligon, Petaste, Oxeia and Kouphisma. The Pelaston and Dyo Kentemata are not included, the former because it does not occur in the examined melodies, and the latter because it is encountered always in combination with other signs and never alone above the syllables of the text.

The below conclusions were based on a new indexing of the 56 stichera idiomela and on the establishing of new analytical tables, which will be published after the completion of the investigation of all the signs.

### 1. OLIGON ( — )

- A) The Oligon is followed, as a rule, by an ascending note or an ison.

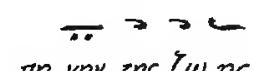
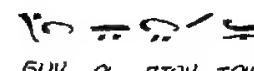
 3,5       9,4

 9,2       12,4

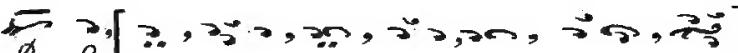
- B) If the Oligon is followed by a descending note, then it is combined with:

- a) a Diple ( .. )

 3,15       12,9

 27,6       36,10

- b) a Kratema ( ↗ )



In these cases, below the Kratema we always have an accented syllable.

ΑΙΓΑΙΟΝ ΕΠΑΝΟΣ ΕΙΣΙΔΟΣ

3.10

χριστού

16.8

9.5

φαλ λάτ των

9

C) Oligon is also used, when followed by a descending note belonging to the same syllable. In these cases the Oligon is preceded by a Bareia (  ) and is often combined with a Tzakisma (  ) or a Piasma (  ).

100 3,4 17 → 21,17 100 33,2  
θε οὐ καὶ δι νοῦ νοῦς νοῦς

D) As a rule the Oligon occurs on unaccented syllables of the text. But when it is combined with a Diple ( .. ) or Kratema ( x ) and often with Bareia ( ~ ) and Tsakisma ( ~ ) or Piasma ( = ), then it is encountered above accented syllables too. The same applies also in the few cases in which other signs with dynamic value can not be used.

— — — — 4,1  
o ev go pi a

— — — — 9,2  
GUY n<sup>o</sup> μ ε νος

2. PETASTE ( )

A) The Petaste is used,

a) When followed by one descending note (of any value) with a separate syllable.

→, [→, →, →, →, →, →, →, etc.]

θE → 0 → kou

4.10

καὶ ποτὲ

90, 12

11-5-22  
GTE DE W 500

53.6

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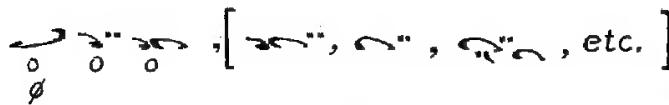
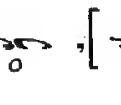
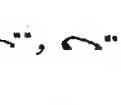
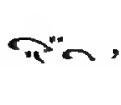
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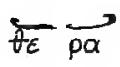
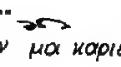
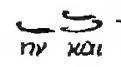
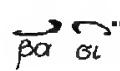
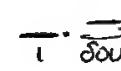
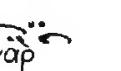
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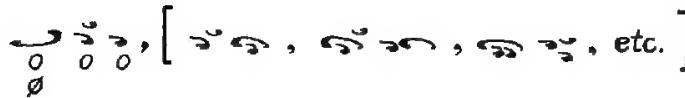
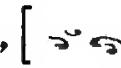
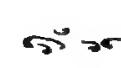
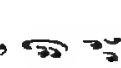
(The Symbol  $\emptyset$  denotes an accented syllable and 0 an unaccented one).

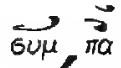
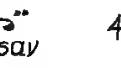
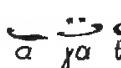
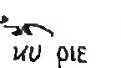
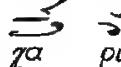
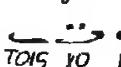
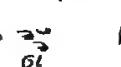
- b) When followed by two or more descending notes, of which the first is necessarily combined with Dyo Kentemata.

 [  ,  ,  , etc. ]

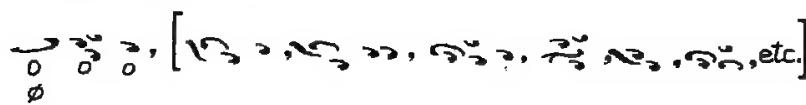
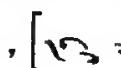
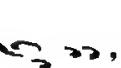
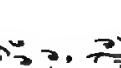
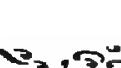
   12,5	   23,5
   64,6	   34,4

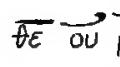
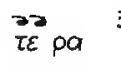
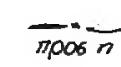
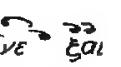
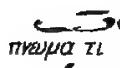
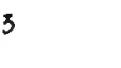
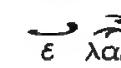
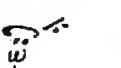
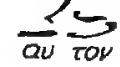
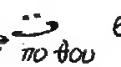
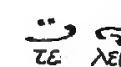
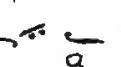
- c) When followed by two or more descending notes with separate syllables, of which at least the first has a Tzakisma (  $\curvearrowleft$  ) or Dyo Apostrophoi (  $\curvearrowright$  ).

 [  ,  ,  , etc. ]

   4,3	   3,15
   11,4	   18,10

- d) When followed by two or more descending notes, of which the first two belong necessarily to the same syllable.

 [  ,  ,  ,  , etc. ]

   36,7	   18,3
   48,13	   79,8
   69,4	   3,5

- e) When followed by two or more descending notes with separate syllables, and the first of these notes has a Petaste beneath it.

ଶବ୍ଦାଳ୍ପିନୀ, [ଶବ୍ଦ, ଶବ୍ଦାଳ୍ପିନୀ, ଶବ୍ଦାଳ୍ପିନୀ, etc.]

✓ 3 20 " pas 38,10

ανθρώποι 49,3

60 q1 as ta a поприя 106,4

λυ δαι πα θη

f) When followed by two descending notes with separate syllables and Diple.

J. R. R.

← → ? ? 29,3  
xa tol xh tn pi on

B) The Petaste is found above accented syllables of the text at a percentage of 60%. This shows that it is a sign with a considerable dynamic value.

C) Petaste is never combined with a Tzakisma ( ✓ ).

### 3. OXEIA (✓)

A) The Oxeia is combined with a Tzakisma but never with a Diple.

B) An Oxeia is placed when two or more descending notes with separate syllables follow, and at least the first of these notes has the same value as the Oxeia.

$\emptyset$   $\rightarrow$   $\rightarrow$ , [  $\rightarrow$   $\rightarrow$ ,  $\rightarrow$   $\rightarrow$   $\rightarrow$ ,  $\rightarrow$   $\rightarrow$   $\rightarrow$ ,  $\rightarrow$   $\rightarrow$   $\rightarrow$ , etc. ]

60 64 9 700 3,4

7a 1 ep 7a 100 3,2

to youанс 꼭운즈 34,5

καὶ εἰς τὸν τεῖχον 56,4

ΕΚ ΧΛΗΝ ΣΙ ΑΥ ΣΟΥ ΧΡΙ ΣΤΕ 51,2

C) An Oxeia is employed, even if it is followed by one descending note with separate syllable:

a) When there is a Tzakisma above the Oreia

$\frac{1}{2} \pi$  " [20, 20", 20, etc.]

Χριστού το θέντα 23,10

κυριος ε 17,1

οι ο και η μεις 48,11

ξυλω 54,6

(Note: There exist several cases in which the combination Oxeia+Tzakisma is followed by two descending notes with separate syllables or two descending notes, of which the first one belongs to the same syllable as the Oxeia).

και πη ξυ λαμβανουσας 48,10 (see 50,5.50,8.64,10.67,6 etc.).

η μων αναλλοιωτε 3,13 καθα πορ της 97,1

b) When the Oxeia has Dyo Kentemata below it.

την μην μην 50,1

βα βη λα 22,8

ο ει ε 13,8

του του 66,7

c) In cases, when the Oxeia is combined with signs for the augmentation of the time value (>, >>, >>>, >>>>, etc. ), then it seems that it loses its dynamic value and is used as a leading-on note. For this reason, in most of these cases, the note that follows is not a descending one but an Ison or an ascending one.

καταβαλε δι α 4,9/10

εγκαι νι ων 49,17

χρισεως τους 90,11/12

τε λει α 3,5

d) The combination >> should be considered as a special case, in which the Oxeia does not seem to lose its dynamic value.

D) The Oxeia is found above the accented syllables of the text at a percentage of 85%, which shows that it is the principal dynamic sign for the ascending second.

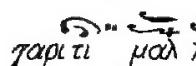
4. KOUPHISMA (κουφίσμα)

A) The Kouphisma is found in the same places as the Petaste and often the Oxeia. Indeed, it is very usual to detect above a Petaste or an Oxeia a second writing with a Kouphisma in red ink. And quite often a certain formula appears in one MS with Kouphisma and in another one with Petaste or Oxeia.

a) Examples with second writings in red ink from the same MS.

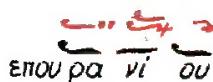
                                       <img alt="Red ink Kouphisma symbol" data-bbox="2660

- B) The Kouphisma is placed above an accented syllable with an Ison, when, for orthographic reasons, the Petaste is not permitted.

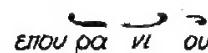
 11,4. See 23,5. 33,9. 37,9. 84,23. 91,6 etc.

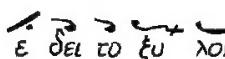
- C) The Kouphisma is placed above an accented syllable with an Oligon, when the use of the Petaste is not allowed or is not considered convenient.

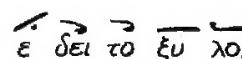
Sinai 1230.

 72,15

Coislin 42.



 54,20



- D) The Kouphisma in combination with a prolonged note above an accented syllable often replaces the Oxeia.

Sinai 1230

 37,10

Coislin 42.



 54,25



- E) The fact that the Kouphisma is placed above accented syllables of the text at a percentage 100%, and particularly in places such as those of the Petaste or the Oxeia could lead to the faulty conclusion that the Kouphisma is the principal dynamic sign for the ascending second. But it should be assumed, that the Kouphisma replaces the Petaste or the Oxeia above the accented syllables, when a relief or a lessening of the emphasis in the accent is considered necessary.

In the present paper - as it was previously mentioned - a first attempt has been made to understand the rules which govern the orthography of the signs Oligon, Petaste, Oxeia and Kouphisma. The rules which were set forth should not be considered final, as they were drawn from a specific and limited material. When all the signs are looked into in the same way, and especially when the whole study is completed with the examination of a greater number of melodies, the above rules could be partly modified or even revised. But whatever the case may be, already from the above - perhaps incomplete - conclusions, it becomes clear that Byzantine Music is based on a system of musical notation which is ingenious in its details and worth studying in greater depth.